

MISSOURI CONSERVATIONIST

December
2005

Volume 66
Issue 12

Serving Nature & You



Vantage Point

A Year of Challenge, A Future of Opportunity

Reflecting on the past year, it's hard to ignore the impact of Mother Nature on our society. Drought, floods, hurricanes and wildfires filled the news and impacted many Americans' homes and livelihoods.

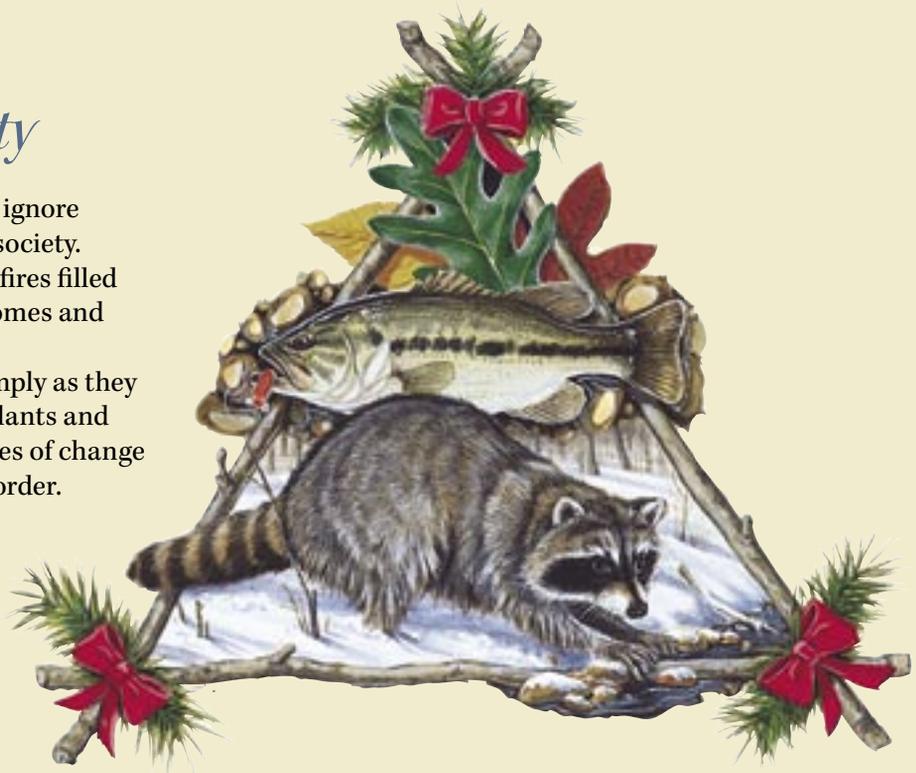
Natural forces disregard state lines as simply as they ignore neighbor's fences. Yet, many rivers, plants and animals find methods to adapt to the stresses of change and await some restoration of balance and order.

The challenge of conservation in the 21st century is to achieve a balance between what it takes to make wildlife and forests healthy while serving the needs of our people and communities. Engaging in this public debate is positive if it identifies what we value and what we will sacrifice to achieve it.

Growing up in rural Missouri exposed me to a variety of efforts to control the flow of water, change the shape of land or alter natural vegetation. Most of this work was motivated by good intentions to make the land more productive or recreation more enjoyable. As my conservation education increased, I better understood that short-term gains on one property can sometimes create lasting hardships for other parts of the same system. John Muir described these impacts simply—"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

At the Department of Conservation, we spend a great deal of our budget studying fish, forests and wildlife. But, we also spend significant portions to engage hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, landowners, forestry professionals, local governments and our neighbors in the day-to-day business of wildlife management.

I am thankful the Department views conservation as a product of many species and many interests working in harmony to achieve long-term results. I am equally grateful our focus is on the workings of larger natural systems, such as watersheds and ecological regions, where progress depends upon cooperative partnerships



and collective wisdom. We believe our programs will move forward more rapidly if public and private partners expand upon what the Department could do if we went alone.

In this varied mix of interests, I especially place high value on the unique role of Missouri's anglers, hunters and trappers in ensuring that wildlife populations remain sustainable and healthy. Managed, ethical harvest of wildlife is a strong Missouri heritage and a requirement for future conservation success.

As the New Year approaches, my wish is for a larger, focused discussion about how our fish, forest and wildlife resources can successfully coexist with man's desire for progress and prosperity. I encourage each of you to actively engage in an exchange of ideas with your family members, community leaders and other organizations to promote responsibility for wise conservation of the resources that share this land.

Happy holidays and best wishes for the New Year!

John D. Hoskins, Director

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♻️ Printed on recycled paper with soy ink



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Contact us: Web page: www.missouriconservation.org

Subscriptions: free to adult Missouri residents;
out of state \$7 per year; out of country \$10 per year.

Send correspondence to: Circulation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180.

Phone: 573/522-4115, ext. 3856 or 3249

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SPECIAL ISSUE SENTIMENTS

I just finished reading the October *Missouri Conservationist*. What a delightful and informative overview of our state! I applaud the "All Wildlife Conservation" approach. Even when other issues have divided us, the Department of Conservation and the votes that continue to fund its work through a dedicated tax have always made me proud to be from Missouri.

Marily Braun, Fair Grove

Your magazine has always been good, but the "All Wildlife Conservation" issue has been the best ever. It gives a beautiful sweeping glimpse of our state's ecological diversity and natural history, while providing a meaningful, balanced vision for the future conservation of these treasures.

Herb and Ruth Rice, Brunswick

I just received my October issue of the *Conservationist* and was shocked, it is nothing but a catalog of items to purchase from the Commission!

October is the opening of the waterfowl season, archery season and fall fishing; in this issue there is not a single mention of fishing or hunting.

Bill Mundy, Platte Woods

Editor's Note: October has traditionally been the month we've made our Nature Shop brochure available. It is inserted in the regular issue. The Department is no less committed to those who enjoy hunting and fishing. Those activities depend on solid habitat management. The Vantage Point piece in the front of the magazine addresses the reason for the special theme for this issue.

MYSTERY MUSSEL

In the October '05 issue, the "High Country" article mentions a "Neosho mucket," but without a picture of it. I have looked in the *Reader's Digest North American Wildlife*, and TWO dictionaries and cannot find the word *mucket*. What is it, and what does it look like?

Dave Marlow, St. Louis



Young Neosho muckets

*Editor's note: The Neosho mucket (*Lampsilis rafinesqueana*), is a mussel. The shell is oblong and dark yellow to brown, with green rays in younger specimens. They can grow over 4 inches long. For further details and photos try www.missouriconservation.org/conmag/2003/08/10.htm.*

SENIORS SAVE

I am 70 years old; what do I need to be legal for fishing and hunting in Missouri?

John Guittar, via Internet

Editor's Note: Residents age 65 or older do not require permits for fishing or small game hunting. Permits are still required for deer, wild turkey, migratory birds and, in some cases, trout. Official documentation is required and limits and methods still apply. See chapter 5 of the Wildlife Code for details and exceptions, or find it online at: www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/3csr/3csr.asp.

HAPPY CAMPERS

I am writing in regard to the Missouri Department of Conservation's Family Outdoors Skills Camp for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children that took place August 13 and 14, 2005.

My deaf son, Alex, and the entire family drove five hours to take part in this unique outdoors program. We had a fantastic experience far exceeding our expectations, despite the rain. The Family Outdoor Skills Camp could not



DINING OUT

Lowell and Waldeane Logan's yard in Butler is a popular stop for pileated woodpeckers. Here, a female (left) watches as a male (right) plucks peanuts from a feeder. Approximately crow-sized, pileated woodpeckers are the largest of Missouri's resident woodpeckers.

have been such a success and positive experience without the dedicated men and women who gave of their time, expertise and self.

I want to take this opportunity to send a special thank you to all those involved, including the Compton Traditional Bowhunters, Missouri Department of Conservation, and the Missouri Conservation Agents [Association]. We are truly grateful and appreciative of all you do for our son Alex and all the other deaf children

and their families. I was extremely impressed, by not only the bowhunters' skills, but also their boundless level of patience! We look forward to next year.

Sheri Cerame, Florissant

Editor's Note: Other supporters included: Missouri School for the Deaf, The United Bowhunters of Missouri, the Boy Scouts of America, Wal-Mart, the Warsaw Shrine Club, Coral Reef Seafood, Buzz's Market and the Toad Suck Grill.

The letters printed here reflect readers' opinions about the Conservationist and its contents. Space limitations prevent us from printing all letters, but we welcome signed comments from our readers. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Ask the Ombudsman



Q: The Outdoor Calendar says that archery season closes January 15. Does this mean the 14th is the last day of hunting, or is the 15th the last day?

A: January 15 is the last day. Archery deer/turkey hunting will end one-half hour after sunset on that day.

Here's an excerpt from Chapter 20 of the *Wildlife Code*: (15) *Days or dates: All days and dates shall be inclusive. A day shall begin or end at midnight, unless otherwise specified.*

Dates are always inclusive; however, some seasons have different daily starting and closing times. For example, during the teal season in September, shooting hours begin at sunrise and end at sunset. During the regular waterfowl season, shooting hours begin one-half hour before sunrise and end at sunset.

Legal hours for small game are specific to the animal. During the season, furbearers may be taken day and night, with some restrictions. The frog season begins at sunset on June 30 and ends at midnight on October 31. Rabbits may only be hunted from sunrise to sunset. Squirrels, quail and several other species don't have specific shooting hours.

Such variation in restrictions allows for the protection of wildlife, better opportunities to identify legal game, and safety concerns.

For details on hunting seasons, check out the MDC Hunting page at www.missouriconservation.org/hunt or pick up a copy of the *Wildlife Code*, available wherever permits are sold, at MDC regional offices and online at www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/3csr/3csr.asp.

Ombudsman Ken Drenon will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Conservation Department programs. Write him at P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573/522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ken.Drenon@mdc.mo.gov.

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The *Missouri Conservationist* (ISSN 0026-6515) is the official monthly publication of the Missouri Department of Conservation, 2901 West Truman Boulevard, Jefferson City, MO (Mailing address: P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102.) Subscription free to adult Missouri residents; out of state \$7 per year; out of country \$10 per year. Notification of address change must include both old and new address (send mailing label with the subscriber number on it) with 60-day notice. Preferred periodical postage paid at Jefferson City, Mo., and at additional entry offices. Postmaster: Send correspondence to Circulation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180. Phone: 573/751-4115. Copyright © 2005 by the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.



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Printed in USA

Missouri's greatest conservation resource is its citizens. With the majority of land in private ownership, state programs would be useless without landowner and community participation.



In the Central Region, partnerships

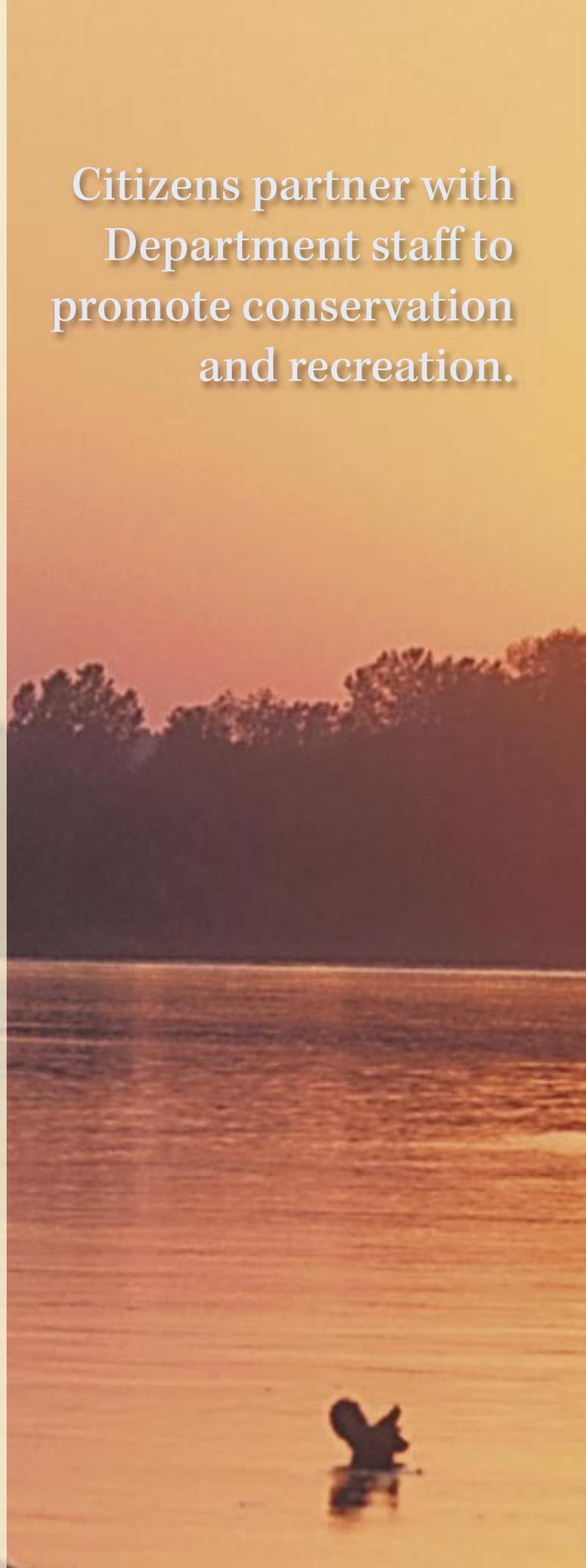
between citizens

and the Conservation Department have had many successes. These include improved habitats, increased game and fish populations, community forestry assistance, the creation of outdoor classrooms and better-equipped fire departments. Ninety conservation areas have been created in the region, most of these convenient to major highways.

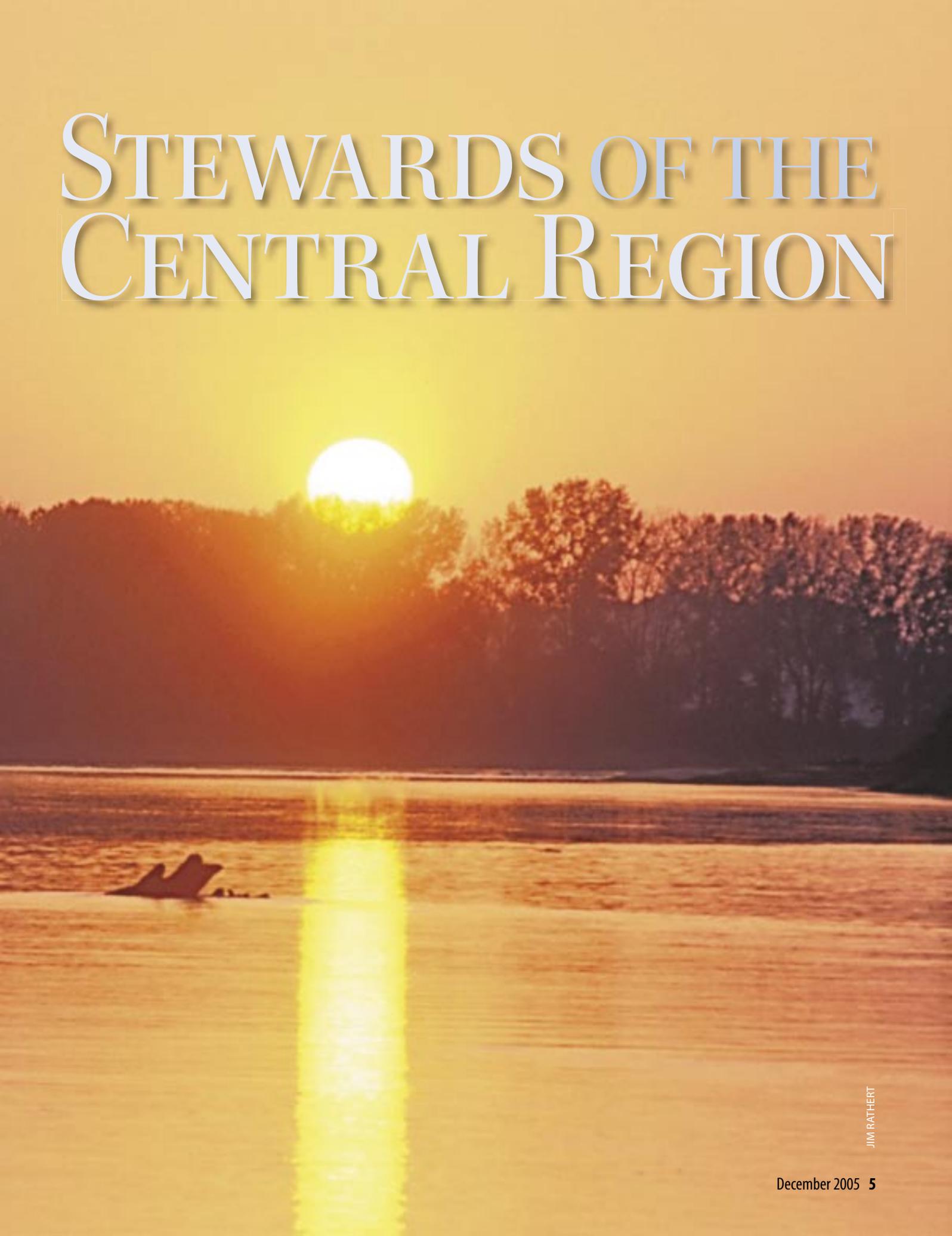
This focus on the Central Region showcases the experiences of one region's citizens and highlights some of the unique recreation opportunities in the area.

Whether you follow in their footsteps or just follow their wooded paths, you'll see how conservation partnerships can transform communities.

Citizens partner with Department staff to promote conservation and recreation.



STEWARDS OF THE CENTRAL REGION



JIM RATHER



When people ask what I do for a living and I tell them I'm an urban forester for the Missouri Department of Conservation, I often get perplexed looks. They are obviously asking themselves, "Isn't that an oxymoron?"

Actually, it's not. The Department is committed to the management of forest, fish and wildlife in all of our communities—both rural and urban.

In the Central Region, the following programs are just some of the ways that the Department is involved with supporting our local communities.

FORESTRY TRIM

Many towns in the Central Region have taken advantage of MDC's community forestry cost-share program. Funded by MDC, TRIM (Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance) provides financial assistance for a variety of community forestry-related projects on public property.

TRIM helps fund the development of educational materials, tree inventories, community forestry training, removal of hazardous trees, tree planting and much more. Each applicant can receive up to \$10,000. Last year, the Central Region received approximately \$51,500 for projects in Columbia, Rocheport, Fayette, Boonville, Centralia, Marshall and Sturgeon.

Fayette's experience is a good example of how funds have been used. After a major storm swept through the town, staff at the elementary school thought it best to have their playground trees trimmed.

A company was hired to do the work, and rather than selectively removing dead and damaged branches, all the ash trees in the playground were topped. That got the negative attention of many town folk who knew that topping is harmful to trees. A letter was even run in the

**Programs that support both
urban and rural residents.**

by Ann Koenig

COMMUNITY



JIM RATHERT



Communities such as Rocheport can benefit from a variety of MDC programs, including financial assistance for community forestry projects.

CONSERVATION



local paper on how it was a shame that such a practice was conducted at a learning institution.

The school staff was able to turn lemons into lemonade by applying for a TRIM grant. They were given funding to plant hard maple trees in the playground to replace the topped trees, which will be removed once the maples become established. Teachers also taught students about proper tree care.

On the other hand, Centralia requested TRIM funding to maintain trees rather than replace them.

Centralia is blessed with many over-mature ash trees and some are declining. Centralia Tree Board members conducted a hazard tree assessment on part of the publicly owned street and park trees, then applied to have some trees removed and others pruned.

The Tree Board is using the publicly owned trees as an example of how to prune correctly. They were granted funding both for tree removal and tree pruning and to purchase space in their local paper to insert anti tree topping advertisements.

Community forestry planning and technical assistance

The Saline County Commission has also tapped into a tree management resource offered by the Department of Conservation.

At the Saline County Courthouse, the Department's Forestry Division designed a tree management plan for the courthouse grounds. It included information on which trees to prune and how to do so, which trees



CLIFF WHITE



JIM RATHERT

Some of the many services MDC provides communities are local fishing opportunities through Community Assistance Program lakes and educational programs, such as Smokey Bear, to educate children about the importance of the natural world. They also provide equipment and grants to rural fire departments to fight wildland fires that threaten peoples' homes.



CLIFF WHITE

should be removed, what kind of trees to plant and where to plant them.

The Department's services have also been used at correctional facilities in Marshall and Columbia, on the Marshall Habilitation Center campus, downtown in Jefferson City, at a cemetery in Montgomery City and in right-of-way areas in Hermann.

These services would also be beneficial for other public institutions—such as fire and police stations, public schools, libraries, city halls and parks—wherever a commitment to actively care for trees is demonstrated.

Smokey Bear Materials

Want some Smokey Bear materials for a local event? The Department has those, too. Local forestry offices

in the Central Region keep a supply of Smokey Bear pencils, rulers, bags and much more to distribute free of charge at local events such as parades, Day with Wildlife events, fire department open houses and kids' programs. If you are organizing an event and would like Smokey Bear supplies, simply contact your local forester.

Fire Department Support

Protecting forests from damaging wildfires is one aspect of the Department of Conservation's mission to preserve and protect Missouri's forests. Luckily, there are strong rural volunteer fire departments throughout the state, and they and the Department work together on wildfire suppression.

In the past year, the Conservation Department has distributed \$60,000 to rural fire departments in the Central Region. Twenty-eight fire departments from Argyle to Westphalia, and from Brumley to Vichy, used these funds to purchase equipment such as backpack blowers, hoses and personal protective equipment.

Another way the Department supports fire departments is through the Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP). FEPP is federal equipment on loan to state foresters for use in rural and wildland fire protection programs. The Department uses FEPP to loan equipment such as pumper trucks, generators and tools to fire departments.

Besides all the pumps, hoses and tanks, fire departments in the Central Region have a total of \$2.8 million worth of big-ticket items—including 120 vehicles—on loan from the Department.

FISHERIES

CAP Agreements

The Community Assistance Program (CAP) helps provide close-to-home fishing opportunities in communities throughout the state.

In this program, the Missouri Department of Conservation enters into agreements with local governments, schools and businesses to provide fisheries management at existing lakes and ponds. They also provide most of the funding to develop and maintain facilities for anglers and boaters at lake and stream

accesses. Facilities may include boat ramps, fishing and courtesy docks, privies, roads and parking lots. The cost of these facilities ranges from \$10,000 to \$500,000. In return, the partners assist with development of the facilities, allow free public use of the area and provide routine maintenance.

In the Central Region, the Department has entered into CAP agreements with eight local partners and provided management and facilities at 22 lakes (670 acres) and one Missouri River access. These include Binder Lake, McKay Park Lake and Noren Access (Missouri River) in Jefferson City; Cosmo-Bethel Park Lake, Stephens Lake and Twin Lakes in Columbia; Marshall Habilitation Center Lake in Marshall; Lakeview Park Lake in Mexico and more.

In a typical year, the Department stocks more than 5,000 channel catfish in the Central Region CAP lakes.

Winter Trout Program

Do the chilly months of winter have you itching to get outdoors and try something new? What about winter trout fishing? The Central Region partners with Jefferson City and Columbia to offer two opportunities to do just that.

Many anglers favor trout because they are particularly feisty on the end of a line and tasty as well. However, trout need cool, oxygenated water to survive. Winter and early spring is the only time that most of the lakes in Missouri can support them.

The Missouri Department of Conservation teams with Columbia and Jefferson City to stock 2,400 trout that weigh up to 6 pounds in McKay Park Lake and Cosmo-Bethel in November. The trout, which are active and much easier to catch in the winter than other Missouri fishes, can be caught and released until February 1, after which they can be caught and kept.

If it gets cold enough for the lake to freeze sufficiently, Columbia even allows ice fishing. In 2003, the frosty winter froze many lakes. As many as 40 anglers (including me and my two-year-old son) could be found dropping lines into holes in the ice at Cosmo-Bethel Lake!

Rod and Reel Loan Program

Tired of watching your kids play video games? Want to spark their interest in the great outdoors? The Missouri Department of Conservation helps introduce kids to fishing by loaning them a rod and reel. Organized



CLIFF WHITE

The Department provides a wealth of instructional materials and assistance that benefits students and teachers.



CLIFF WHITE

With money and assistance provided by MDC, students have the opportunity to learn about nature, hands-on.

groups with adult supervision can borrow rods and reels for a fishing outing. Even tackle and bait are supplied. MDC will help with first-time events if adult supervisors have no fishing experience. Groups usually use local public lakes.

The Department sometimes stocks local lakes with extra fish (hybrid sunfish and channel catfish) prior to planned events. Also, youngsters that catch their very first fish can get a First Fish Award. Last year in the Central Region, the rod and reel loan program helped more than 1,400 kids go fishing!

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Outdoor classroom grants

The Missouri Department of Conservation and the Conservation Heritage Foundation have teamed up to fund outdoor classrooms at Missouri's schools to create outdoor learning areas and enhance habitat. Up to \$1,000 can be awarded to schools to do such things as plant trees and wildflowers, put up bird feeders, or build ponds or benches. Since 2001, twenty-one grants have been awarded in the Central Region.

PROTECTION

Radio Program

Want up-to-date, local information on conservation issues? How about a radio call-in show, featuring conservation agents and other Department staff? You've got it.



CLIFF WHITE

Conservation agents, and other regional staff, spread the conservation message at the local level.

Every week for the past 10 years, the Missouri Department of Conservation has conducted a live radio program with local conservation agents and their guests. For one hour each Saturday starting at 6 a.m., residents in Cole and Boone Counties can tune in and learn about conservation in their own backyards. The program is aired on 1240 AM in Jefferson City and 1400 AM in Columbia.

The Missouri Department of Conservation is involved in many projects in the Central Region. Questions about these and other community-based programs can be directed to the Missouri Department of Conservation Central Regional Office at 573/884-6861. ▲



THE CENTER OF IT ALL



From bottomland to bluffs, you'll never want for excitement in the heart of Missouri.

by Jeff Cockerham



Osage River

JIM RATHER

Residents and visitors to central Missouri will find a variety of options for outdoor recreation. Hunters, anglers, hikers, photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts will find most of these convenient to highways 50, 54, 63 and 70.

The Missouri Department of Conservation refers to this portion of the state as the Central Region. The Central Region is made up of 15 counties that are organized for management purposes. The Department's management objectives include providing diverse outdoor recreational opportunities for the public.

While one short article could never encompass all the recreational potential of the Central Region, we'll take a look at some of the key areas and features in the region and a few activities to explore.

Missouri River

No description of central Missouri would be complete without mention of the Missouri River. Perhaps the most dominant feature in the region, the Missouri flows roughly from northwest to southeast, 265 miles through the region. This dynamic river provides vital habitat for fish and wildlife, and the bottomlands along the river provide access and opportunities for anglers, hunters, photographers and other resource users.

Anglers have long recognized the Missouri River as the place to be for catching catfish. Channel catfish, blue catfish and flatheads are eagerly sought after by bank-fishers and those in boats. Catching a real trophy fish is likely on this river. Flatheads and blues in excess of 50 pounds are not uncommon. Record-breaking or not, though, it's hard to beat a plate full of deep-fried flathead.

The areas behind and along the wing dikes and sandbars are good locations to set trot lines, limb lines, bank lines or to cast your rod and reel in search of these whiskered fish.

Waterfowl hunters also target the slack water behind the dikes and the islands. Ducks and geese often use the river as a migratory flyway, stopping to rest and feed in those areas.

Those who hunt along the river find a mixed bag of waterfowl. Ducks may include mallards, teal, scaup, ringneck and goldeneyes. Canada, snows and white-fronted geese also use these areas and can make for an exciting hunt when they come through Missouri in the fall and winter.

The Department developed and currently maintains 10 Missouri River access sites with boat ramps in the region. These areas are located on both sides of the river, making them convenient for people to access.



CLIFF WHITE

The Central Region abounds with year-round opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Hunting and wildlife viewing are only two of the many activities available on MDC lands.

The conservation areas along the Missouri River are another great resource. These areas serve as important buffers—protecting banks, providing habitat and acting like a sponge when river levels rise. Many of these areas are managed as bottomland forest, seasonal wetlands and uplands.

This varied habitat attracts an assortment of wildlife. Whitetail deer, turkey and squirrel are plentiful in these areas. During migrations, waterfowl and shorebirds use these areas for resting and feeding. Hunters, wildlife watchers and photographers generally find good populations of wildlife for their outdoor pursuits.

Lake of the Ozarks/Osage River

In the southern part of the Central Region, the Lake of the Ozarks and Osage River system offer variety in both landscape and recreation options.

While there is moderate boat traffic on the lake, those who make use of the “off season” will find they



JIM RATHERT

have much of the area to themselves. The Lake of the Ozarks/Osage River is a tremendous fishery resource. Largemouth bass and crappie are probably the most sought-after fish on the lake, but walleye and catfish are also popular.

In spring, anglers enjoy the annual paddlefish snagging season. Paddlefish, sometimes called spoonbill, are native to the Osage River System. Years ago, paddlefish would swim up the Osage to spawn. Dams on the river interrupted this process. Today, paddlefish are

raised in Department hatcheries and released back into the lake and river. They can grow very large, and make fine trophies for those who seek them out.

Hunters can also find success on the lake, especially in waterfowl hunting. Ducks and geese are attracted by the varied habitat. Protected coves, shallow backwaters and islands are excellent places to set up for waterfowl hunting. The sandbars on the Osage River are another good spot for waterfowl hunters.

Bird watchers and outdoor photographers have long known that the lake and the Osage River are good places to view and photograph birds. Besides the waterfowl, gulls, shorebirds and bald eagles are frequently seen in the area.

Every January, the Department hosts the annual “Eagle Day” event at the Willmore Lodge and Bagnell Dam Access. Bald eagles, attracted by the open water and abundance of food, can be viewed from the lodge and along the river as they sit in trees or fly along the river searching for food.

Other Opportunities

There are a number of conservation areas in the Central Region with trail systems that hikers or outdoor explorers can use. Grand Bluff, Hart Creek, Three Creeks, Prairie Home, Rudolph Bennitt and Diana Bend conservation areas have trails of varying lengths and surfaces. Some of these areas also have “overlook” sites, presenting elevated views of bottomland forests and river flood plains.

Camping is also permitted on many of the conservation areas. However, most of the camping is primitive, meaning there is a site but no amenities. Before setting up a tent, make sure to check the area regulations to see whether camping is permitted or if there are any limitations. As always, be careful with fire and remove litter when finished.

One of the real jewels of the region is the Runge Conservation Nature Center. Located in Jefferson City, the nature center offers something for almost everyone.

Hikers will enjoy the nearly 2.5 miles of trails that wind through the area. Wildlife watchers and photographers can add to their “life lists” or portfolios in the viewing area.

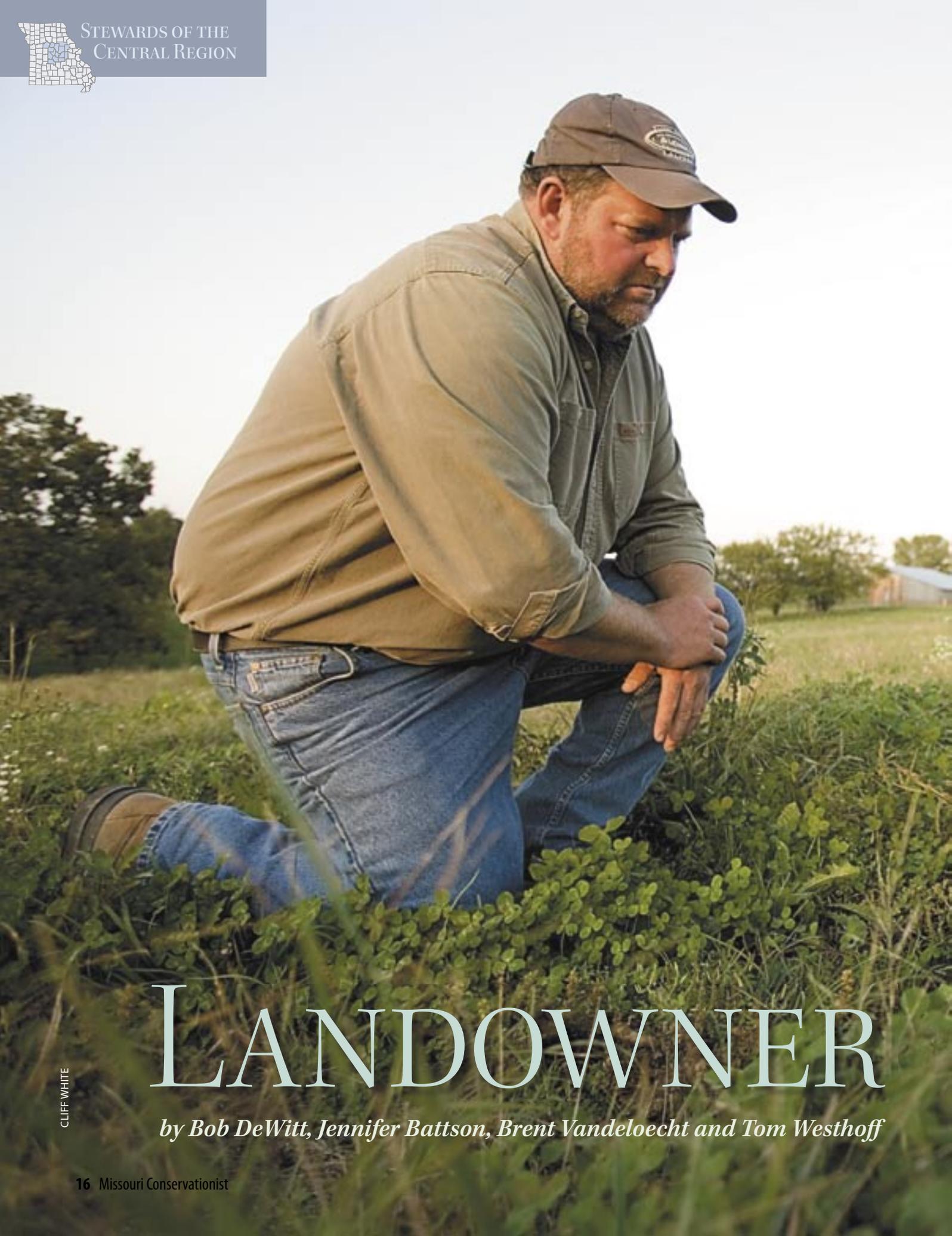
The Missouri River provides nearby, easily accessible recreational opportunities for many.

Inside the building, visitors can learn about Missouri habitats as they stroll through 3,000 square feet of exhibits. Nature programs, films, special events, a nature library and a gift shop provide a full day of activity for anyone looking for a fun and relaxing time with nature.

The Central Region of Missouri possesses a diversity of landforms, geologies and soils. This rich mixture has given rise to the many special opportunities here. Visit the Missouri Department of Conservation Web site at www.missouriconservation.org/atlas for more details, specific area regulations, trails and maps. ▲



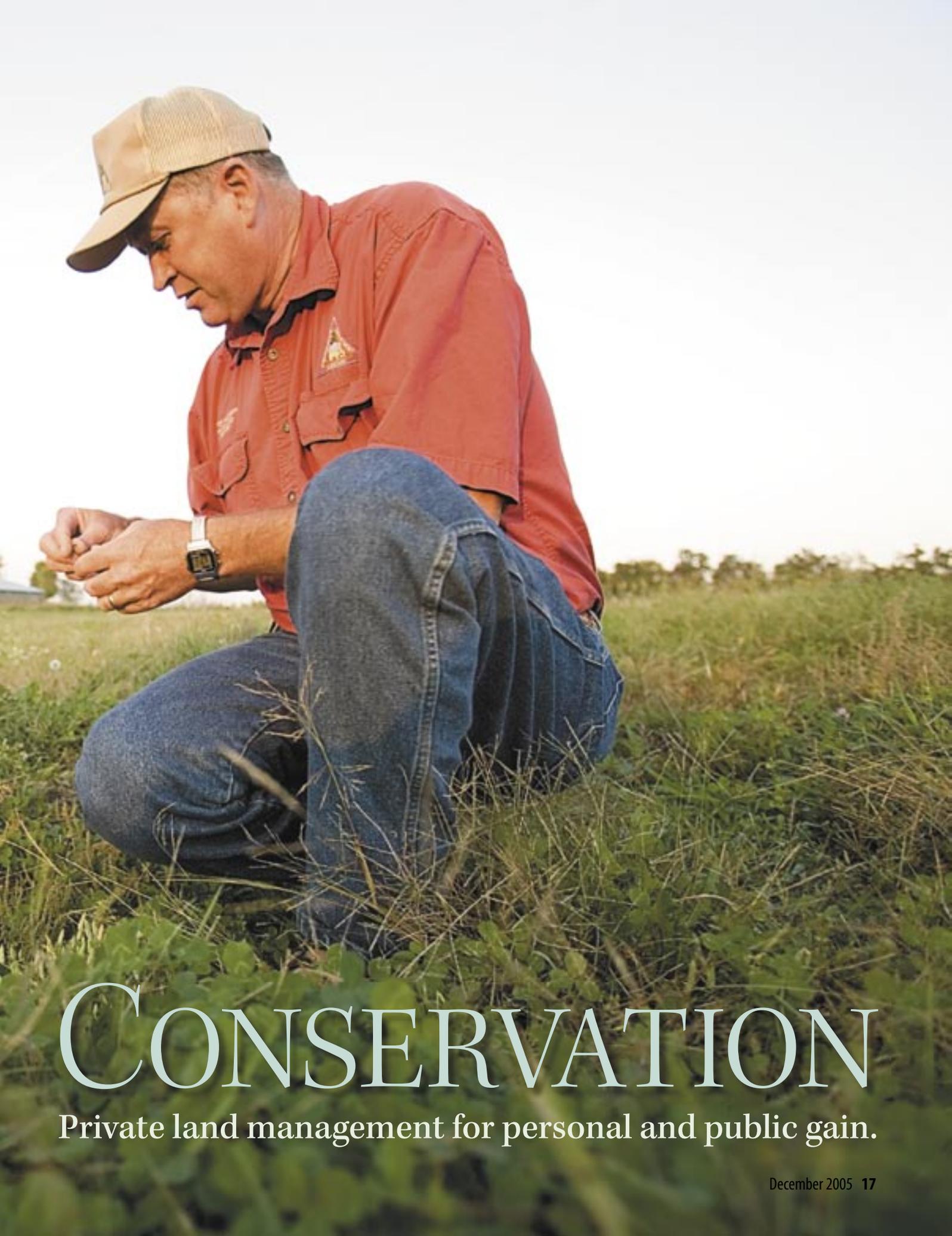
JIM RATHER



LANDOWNER

by Bob DeWitt, Jennifer Battson, Brent Vandeloecht and Tom Westhoff

CLIFF WHITE



CONSERVATION

Private land management for personal and public gain.



No overview of any region of the state would be complete without taking a look at resource management on private land. The tracts under the stewardship of private landowners account for about 93 percent of the overall landscape.

Long-term, sustainable benefits from our natural world are not possible without the cooperation of landowners. They play a critical role in maintaining and enhancing the diversity and health of our environment.

Both landowners and landscape vary widely in the Central Region. Terrestrial to aquatic, glade to wetland, and forest to prairie habitats are managed by multi-generation farmers and ranchers to first-time owners of rural acreage.

The Missouri Department of Conservation has for decades provided technical assistance to state landowners. Guidance and resources for improving wildlife habitat, as well as fisheries and forestry management, have been provided by conservation agents, biologists, foresters and, more recently, by private land conservationists.

In addition to Department staff, partner agencies such as the United States Department of Agriculture's

Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency have played a major role in supplying technical guidance and financial resources to landowners implementing conservation practices. Also, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's "Partners For Wildlife" program offers assistance to landowners managing for species and habitats of concern.

Sportsmen have long supported habitat management through dedicated tax dollars. However, in more recent times, groups such as Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Ruffed Grouse Society and Quail Unlimited have also funneled thousands of dollars from private fundraising efforts into the region to support landowner conservation efforts.

But no matter the amount of resources provided by others, without the commitment and efforts of individual landowners, landscape-scale conservation would not be possible. Here is a small sampling of landowners' experiences with land stewardship in the Central Region.

Small game, big changes

In the east-central part of the region, a father and son landowner team have worked for decades on conservation concerns. Since the mid-70s, Arvil and Doug Kappelmann have managed their 300-acre Gasconade/Franklin County farm with soil conservation and wildlife habitat in mind.

Like many Missouri landowners, the Kappelmanns had become frustrated with decreasing small game populations. They thought that their food plot management activities should have sustained the quail and rabbit populations and could not understand why they didn't see more wildlife.

It was only when Doug learned more about Missouri's native plants and their communities that the Kappelmanns saw their farm differently. It wasn't the food that was limiting wildlife—it was the habitat for protection, nesting and raising young.

With Doug's passion for native plant restoration and Arvil's lifelong love of quail, the father and son team took their wildlife management to a whole new level. In just five years they began to achieve the results they desired.

The Kappelmanns traded their tractor and brush hog for a chain saw and a couple of drip torches. Then they removed cedar from the idle corners of their farm. They allowed these areas to grow over and blended in annual food plots with the improved cover. As they gained knowledge and confidence, the duo expanded into larger areas and seeded native warm season grasses and wildflowers.



Restoring a small glade is one of the projects Doug (left) and Arvil Kappelmann (right) began with help from MDC Private Lands Conservationist Jennifer Battson (center).



CLIFFWHITE

Natural community restoration and early successional habitat development on a limited farming budget was difficult. As their projects grew in scope, they sought financial assistance through cost-share assistance programs provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation and USDA's Farm Bill.

Through their dedication and the financial assistance provided by state and federal programs, the Kappelmanns have completed 10 acres of cedar removal, 23 acres of native grass and forb establishment (with 15 more planned), 10 acres of glade and savanna restoration (with 10 more planned), and 6 acres of edge-feathering (with 6 more planned). They maintain 46 acres of early successional habitat and crop land. Doug will be completing a 6-acre timber stand improvement project this coming winter as well.

The Kappelmanns readily share their enthusiasm and expertise with anyone who is interested. They are quick to admit that food plots are not the answer to wildlife population problems and that you have to work hard to make habitat happen.

The Kappelmanns are stellar cooperators and conservationists. This is evident not only in the work that they do on their farm, but in their willingness to speak with anyone they meet about the benefits conservation provides for all Missourians.



JIM RATHERT

Wildlife-friendly field border practices are helping father and son farmers, Jim and JC Vogelsmeier, increase their crop yield and provide critical habitat for quail, other grassland birds and wildlife.

Funding for diversity

Owning land in the rugged river hills of southern Montgomery County requires creative management. Dennis Horstman's 175 acres includes forest, woodland, savanna, glade and open ground.

A good steward of the land as well as a hunter, Horstman wanted to improve both the quality of the timber in the forest and the wildlife habitat on his property. With assistance from cost-share programs



CLIFF WHITE

MDC Private Lands Conservationist Brent Vandeloecht (left) assisted David Cramer (center) and Mike Gremaud (right) in converting their 58-acre tract into a “quail paradise.” Quail have rebounded since they began intensive land management.

from a variety of sources, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Horstman property underwent a metamorphosis.

While federal FLEP (Forest Land Enhancement Program) funds were used to complete 36 acres of timber stand improvement (TSI) and a 4-acre forest opening, additional accomplishments were achieved utilizing NGO funds.

The River Hills Forest Habitat Project, a cooperative partnership between the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Audubon Society of Missouri, the National Wild Turkey Federation and MDC, provides matching funds. The group helped Horstman complete a 37-acre timber stand improvement and three 1-acre forest openings. The forest openings helped regenerate low-quality timber and provided early successional habitat for deer, turkey and ruffed grouse, which have been found on the property for the last several years.

In the adjoining openland habitat, funds from Quail Unlimited and MDC’s Quail Habitat Incentive (QHI) partnership program were used to convert a 9-acre fescue field to native grasses and forbs. The glades and savanna on the property offered an opportunity to manage for native plant species.

As is often the case on Missouri glades, the area was overgrown with cedar and other woody plants. Three

areas totaling 10 acres were cleared, and a prescribed burn was conducted using MDC’s conservation practice funds. The results were as immediate as the next growing season. Little bluestem, pale purple coneflower, butterfly weed and numerous other native forb species appeared. Turkey broods, deer and other wildlife are often seen in the burn area.

Completing this work has led to improved timber quality, increased plant diversity and increased wildlife populations. Deer and turkey responded quickly, as should quail. It takes ruffed grouse at least four–five years to respond after completion of the timber work.

Of crops and quail

In eastern Saline County near Hardeman, David Cramer and Mike Gremaud have taken a 58-acre tract and converted it from almost exclusively row crop production to a paradise for quail. As with many recreational landowners, they wanted to create high-quality habitat on their property and to enjoy quail hunting in the fall.

The land is gently rolling with a wooded riparian corridor near the western border of the property and a small stream with no riparian corridor on the east side. Like much of the county, the property had been terraced to shed excess water and control soil erosion.

Since most of the property has a crop history, Cramer and Gremaud looked into Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices that could improve the farm from a wildlife standpoint. Eligible crop ground can be enrolled into a variety of conservation practices (CPs), many with ample wildlife benefits, as well as the soil conservation benefits that are a main focus of the program.

CP21 provided for filter strips that were installed on the riparian corridors and seeded to warm season grass to provide nesting cover for quail. CP14 provided for planting grass on terraces to provide a mosaic of nesting and brood rearing cover throughout crop fields. These grass-backed terraces were seeded to timothy, orchard grass, wheat and lespedeza.

Prior to 2003, Cramer and Gremaud agreed that there was one covey on the farm and another covey that spent at least some time on the property. Last year, after only one year of habitat development, they had four large coveys.

Thrilled with the improvement, they took another step to improve their property by enrolling the north side in the CP33 field border practice (also known as bobwhite buffers). A 30-foot warm-season grass field border was installed, as well as three covey headquarter shrub plantings to provide heavier protective cover. The landowners also requested a burn plan to manage the CP33, CP14 and CP21 practices in future years when the grass stands become too thick to provide optimum quail habitat.

On another 92-acre tract (half general CRP and half wooded) Cramer and Gremaud installed several areas of edge feathering (a practice that changes older forest cover to the younger forest regeneration phase of saplings and annual herbaceous plants) and food plots for wildlife with QHI cost share. Annual disking, prescribed burning and overseeding legumes occur on various portions of the general CRP, all of which is planted to warm season grass or an orchard grass/timothy mix.

By leveraging cost-share opportunities and managing their property intensively, Cramer and Gremaud have seen some great results in a short time. No one knows what this year will hold for sure, but “the quail have been carrying on all spring!” says Cramer.

Cooperative conservation

Small-acreage farmers and recreational landowners do even more to increase wildlife numbers on their properties when they work in unison—intentionally or not.

When landowners in proximity to one another use similar management practices to increase habitat on their land, they have created a landowner cooperative that is targeting a substantial portion of the local landscape. These Missouri farmers have greatly increased their odds of having sustainable quail and other game populations for the future. ▲

If you are a landowner in the Central Region (or elsewhere) and would like more information on conservation assistance for your property, please contact the regional office at 573/884-6861, or visit the Department's Web site at www.missouriconservation.org/landown.



Working in unison with nearby neighbors (several of them extended family members) to have a broader landscape scale effect, Jim (left) and JC (center) Vogelsmeier installed native warm-season grasses on their farm with the assistance of MDC Private Lands Conservationist Brent Vandeloecht (right).



Agents by Tom Cwynar in Aircraft

When conservation agents go aloft,
poachers have no place to hide.



JIM RATHERT

Hunters in tree stands believe deer won't look up for danger. Conservation agents in airplanes know game law violators rarely think to scan the sky. They have the arrest records to prove it.

Conservation agents in uniforms and driving trucks with the Conservation Department logo are easy to spot on land. In the air, however, those agents operate in stealth mode. You don't know they've been working until you get caught.



JIM RATHERT

Central Region Protection District Supervisor Cheryl Fey coordinates with ground units during a patrol.

“Most landowners and law-abiding hunters love that we are using aircraft, because they want us to catch the guys who are doing it wrong,” Roberson said.

Terry Roberson, who recently retired from the Conservation Department, has flown many patrols during his years as a conservation agent. He said aircraft are among an agent’s most valuable tools.

“You’d be surprised at how much you can see from the air,” he said. “You can familiarize yourself with an area’s roads and terrain. You can see isolated camps, hidden boats, tree stands, lumps in trees that are hunters, baited areas, concentrations of boats, even trails that lead away from roads and rivers.”

Roberson estimates that one hour of air-time for an agent equals up to a hundred hours of ground patrol time. The airplanes allow agents to monitor wetlands, large wooded tracts and other property that would be impossible to patrol without alerting potential Wildlife Code violators.

“Most landowners and law-abiding hunters love that we are using aircraft, because they want us to catch the guys who are doing it wrong,” Roberson said.

The Conservation Department has been protecting Missouri’s forest, fish and wildlife resources from the air since 1946, when the “Flight Department” was established. The Department has owned and flown aircraft continuously since that time.

The Department currently operates two fixed-wing, propeller-driven aircraft—a six-seat, single-engine Cessna 210 and an eight-seat, twin-engine Cessna 402. It also owns a five-seat Bell Jet Ranger helicopter.

“Someone is flying somewhere every day,” said Chief Pilot John Reed. “One day we might fly across a large wetland area counting waterfowl, and the next night we’ll be crisscrossing one of Missouri’s counties looking for spotlighters.”

“When leaves are gone, visibility is especially good,” Reed said. “People

think they are hidden—or that they’ve hidden their cars or boats—but all those things are visible when you have the luxury of looking down from above.”

Reed said that from 3,000 feet it’s fairly easy to see spotlighters.

“We can cover a lot of area, and we have agents on the ground ready to respond,” he said. “If we see a light being shined, we’ll take GPS coordinates and keep the vehicle in sight until the agents arrive.”

The planes can follow vehicles wherever they go, even through cities. One fall night in Greene County, pilot Mike Derendinger followed a truck that had been spotlighting a field back to a residential area. He directed agents Mike Loe and Jason Dickey to the residence, where they made an arrest for spotlighting.

While talking to the men involved, the agents noticed an outbuilding with deer heads hanging on the walls and became suspicious. Agent Mike Loe later checked permit and check station records and returned the next day for more questioning, which led to more arrests and to confiscating some of the deer heads.

Conservation agents spend almost half their time teaching people about conservation, but law enforcement remains an important part of their job. Because aircraft are such an efficient means of patrol, all agents learn to use them.

“I’m the one who trains them,” said Cheryl Fey, the Department’s Central Region protection district supervisor. “We do a mock airplane patrol in the academy. They learn everything from how to get into a plane to when they should be using it—and when they shouldn’t.”

Flying in a small plane—often in tight circles low to the ground, or at night while reading maps and charts— isn’t for the queasy.

“Some agents don’t do well in small planes,” Fey said. The ones most immune to airsickness within each region do most of the flying.

“I just need the rest of the agents to understand how the plane locates illegal activity, and how to coordinate with the plane so we can find the violators,” Fey said.

Gene Lindsey, the protection district supervisor in the Department’s northeast region,



Chief Pilot John Reed said Department aircraft fly nearly every day.

says he's participated in plenty of aircraft patrols since he became an agent nearly 35 years ago.

He said agents in his region often fly the Mississippi River and river bottoms in the region to look for illegal baiting of waterfowl.

"We have quite a bit of waterfowl hunting in our region," he said. "We look for new duck blinds and the bait sites themselves. They're pretty easy to see from the air. We mark them with a GPS and come back to them on the ground."

His agents also use aircraft, both airplanes and the helicopter, to monitor smaller rivers for illegal fishing and ATV use in the summer. He's flown those same rivers in the winter looking for illegal gigging.

"When the rivers freeze," Lindsey said, "they cut big holes in the ice for gigging. If the ice is clear, they sometimes use axe handles or gig poles to bang on the ice and herd big catfish to giggers that are waiting at the holes."

Lindsey remembers one patrol when the temperature was near zero degrees. "We landed the helicopter right next to people standing at their gigging holes with illegal fish," he said.

Hunters who illegally bait turkeys and deer are especially vulnerable to agents in aircraft.

"The last time we flew, we found 48 bait sites in just five hours," said Kevin Patterson, a protection district supervisor in the Ozark Region. "All we checked was county, plus a sliver of another."

Patterson said agents hovered over each bait site and logged in GPS readings. "After we gave the agents on the ground the readings," he said, "they were able to walk right to the sites."

Agents in aircraft also helped tame wanton and abusive ATV use on the Black River, which



Recreational ATV use in rivers accelerates erosion and ruins wildlife and fish habitat. Aircraft help agents find and apprehend people illegally using ATVs in streams.

had, according to Patterson, become a circus.

"We made lots of patrols there in recent years," Patterson said, "and the violations steadily diminished, although it is still a problem."

Patterson said agents also are focusing on illegal ATV use on the Current and the Jacks Fork rivers. "It's a constant deal," he said. "People don't seem to understand that they are ruining the rivers and destroying habitat."

"The aircraft help," he said. "Even if the plane or helicopter can't stay with them, we can find where they have parked their vehicles and wait for them."

Agents in aircraft also look for pickup trucks—sometimes with dog boxes in the bed—parked along the road where game is likely to cross. Agents say that when visibility is good in the fall and winter they can even spot dogs running deer.

Gary Cravens, Ozark region protection supervisor, said his agents often use aircraft to spot illegal hunters in boats parked on the Current River near known deer crossings.

"There's so much land here that patrolling it is like looking for a needle in a haystack," Cravens said.

“They turn dogs loose to run deer into the river,” he said. “Swimming deer are helpless, and they just motor up and shoot or club them. We caught one guy who killed a deer with a golf club.”

Aircraft make catching river deer-doggers possible, Cravens said. “There’s so much land here that patrolling it is like looking for a needle in a haystack.”

Cravens said that the agents in the aircraft

know the game crossings, too, and direct ground units to any type of activity that’s out of place.

Conservation agents typically schedule the aircraft for patrols when violations are most likely. They often fly patrols, for example, before, during and after deer and turkey seasons. However, they also take advantage of empty seats when aircraft are scheduled to fly over their county.

“It’s like multi-tasking the airplane,” Cheryl Fey said. “We try to tag along with something else that’s going on, like wildlife telemetry or a river survey. It’s a good opportunity for agents to learn more about their areas.”

In fact, nearly every flight of Conservation Department aircraft helps safeguard Missouri’s wildlife from violators. All Department employees who fly, whether biologists, engineers, planners, administrators or foresters, take advantage of the aerial vantage point to look for suspicious activity.

Conservation agents say it is a shame that some people don’t respect conservation laws, but they are committed to stopping illegal acts through vigilant Wildlife Code enforcement. ▲



The Cessna 402 has many valuable uses for the Department.

Airborne Conservation

“Turkeys are pretty good passengers,” said John Reed, chief pilot for the Conservation Department. “I guess they are used to flying.”

Traveling turkeys aren’t buckled in, but remain in boxes while being transported from one part of the state to another—or from one state to another. The short travel time in an airplane means captured birds can be released quickly, with little stress on the birds.

Relocating wildlife—including fish—is one of the many ways aircraft help the Conservation Department achieve its mission of managing the state’s forest, fish and wildlife resources.

Aircraft are also used to count deer and waterfowl, spot forest fires, look for timber diseases and survey recreational use. They work wonderfully for telemetry on all kinds of wildlife, including finding radio-tagged deer, turkey, otters and fish. In fact,

airborne biologists once pinpointed an implanted transmitter in an otter carcass that had been thrown into a dumpster.

Conservation Department engineers use aircraft to survey building sites before construction and to ensure that shooting range sites are safe. Department photographers use them to obtain aerial photos. The aircraft also transport department representatives and other state officials to conferences and workshops, especially those involving multi-state management of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

The aircraft are not equipped for fire suppression, but they can transport firefighters and their equipment quickly to a hotspot. They have also been used to monitor flood damage and to search for and rescue stranded or injured hunters and anglers.

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Retiree chooses Missouri River for rite of passage

Darrol Gasawski never wanted to leave Missouri, but he had to move to Omaha, Neb., to keep his job. When it came time to retire, he decided to make the trip home to St. Louis the slow, scenic, historic way. He floated home on the Missouri River. Wherever he stopped, people were captivated by his adventure and were eager to help. Some guarded his canoe and gear while he walked into town for supplies. Others offered him a hot shower and a soft bed for the night. High water and hot weather made the trip more challenging than expected, but he arrived home tan and relaxed in late June, 22 days and more than 600 miles after setting out.

Missouri law protects dogs

Missourians are permitted to protect livestock against marauding dogs, but a recent court case shows that landowners must show good sense in how they protect their property.

The case involved a Webster County landowner who suspected that free-running dogs had killed his cow. He attached a foot-hold trap to the cow's carcass. When a neighbor's dog went missing, she found her pet caught in the trap.

Setting a trap in this manner exposed any passing dog to injury, not just the suspected culprits. The judge in the case ordered the cow owner to pay restitution to the owner of the dog for its medical treatment. He also ordered a \$1,000 fine but suspended that sentence, contingent on the cow owner's good behavior during two years' probation.



Livestock owners are only allowed to shoot dogs that are chasing or killing domestic animals. However, the mere fact that a dog has gone where it should not go is not legal justification for harming the animal. Section 578.012 of the Missouri Revised Statutes make intentionally killing or injuring a dog a class-A misdemeanor. Violators also are subject to civil suits for damages.

Ethical hunters do their best to keep their dogs off property where they are not wanted. Trespassing is illegal, so hunters should obtain permission before retrieving dogs that follow game onto others' land.

New boat show docks in St. Charles Jan. 20-22

Ten boat dealers have agreed to take part in the new St. Charles Convention Center's first boat show Jan. 20-22. Cruisers, ski boats, aluminum and fiberglass fishing boats, pontoon boats, deck boats, personal watercraft and high-performance boats will be on display, along with fishing gear and boating-related products. Hours are from noon to 10 p.m., Jan. 20; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Jan. 21; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 22. Admission is \$4. Children under 12 are admitted free. For more information, visit www.letsgoshow.com or call 314/355-1236.



Spotted gar record falls

Brent Meyer of New Haven entered the Missouri state fishing record book with this 6-pound spotted gar caught on Boeuf Creek in Franklin County on Aug. 27. The 34-inch fish bit on a rooster-tail spinner. Information about Missouri's state-record fish program is available at www.missouriconservation.org/fish/records/ or from State Record Fish, Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, 573/751-4115.

RV SHOW HAS NASCAR THEME

"Start Your Engines" is the theme for the 29th St. Louis RV, Camping and Travel Show Jan. 12-15 at the America's Center in downtown St. Louis. An appearance by the NASCAR #38 M&M Simulator and #88 UPS Show Car will highlight the racing theme. Also on the program are travel documentaries about the southeast and northeast coasts and Alaska. Visitors will get to see the latest in recreational vehicles and accessories and visit with representatives of campgrounds, resorts and travel destinations. Hours are noon to 10 p.m., Jan. 12; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Jan. 13; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Jan. 14; and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 15. Admission is \$8 for adults and \$3.50 for children ages 6 to 12. Seniors pay only \$5 on Jan. 12 and 13. For more information, visit www.stlrv.com or call 314/355-1236.



Abuse Missouri streams, lose hunting privileges

Misusing off-road vehicles can be expensive, with fines running into the hundreds of dollars. Now, irresponsible off-roaders can lose hunting and fishing privileges, too.

In August, the Conservation Commission approved a policy aimed at curbing stream damage from all-terrain and four-wheel-drive vehicles. Under the new policy, the Conservation Department recommends hunting and fishing permit suspensions following procedures already in place for other Wildlife Code violations.

One-year suspensions will be the rule, but the period varies with the seriousness of the offense. Those who lose privileges in Missouri also will lose their ability to hunt and fish in 19 other states that belong to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

Broomsedge creates excellent quail cover

When is low fertility in a pasture a good thing? When broomsedge is present, and you want to encourage bobwhite quail.



Broomsedge

Broomsedge—a native warm-season grass—is familiar to anyone who has driven Missouri's back roads in winter. Its orange-tan stems catch the warm glow of early-morning and late-evening sunlight, turning pastures into watercolor paintings.

Not only is broomsedge pretty, it also creates excellent cover for quail and other ground-nesting birds. This hardy grass thrives in soils with low fertility, so converting fields where broomsedge already exists into quail habitat is easy.

The first step is to mow, hay, graze or burn the field. Apply a nonselective herbicide after the first killing frost to take out cool-season grasses. To enhance a broomsedge field's wildlife value, overseed with native wildflowers, legumes or other warm-season grasses, such as little bluestem or side oats gramma. This is best done between November and February.

Maintenance is as simple as burning or lightly disking a third of the field each year. For more quail management tips, visit www.missouriconservation.org/landown/wild/quail/covey/.

2006 ARBOR DAY POSTER CONTEST

Missouri fifth-graders should check out the 2006 Arbor Day Poster Contest. The contest theme is "Trees are Terrific...In All Shapes and Sizes!"

The Conservation Department sent contest information packets to public and private schools in October. Home-school teachers and others can request packets from Donna Baldwin, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, Donna.Baldwin@mdc.mo.gov.

Participating teachers receive free curriculum materials, including in-depth lesson plans, hands-on activities and contest information. Each school's winning poster advances to statewide competition. The state winner goes to the national contest.

State contest submissions are due Feb. 17. The state winner receives a \$50 savings bond and a framed certificate from Forest ReLeaf of Missouri.

The Arbor Day Foundation announces the national winner in April. The winner, parents and teacher of the winning student receive an expense-paid trip to the event. The winner also receives a \$1,000 savings bond. The winning teacher gets \$200 for classroom materials.

Unionville tree decorates Governor's yard

A Colorado blue spruce that had grown too big for a mini-park in Unionville fits perfectly on the front lawn of the governor's mansion in Jefferson City.

Unionville's City Council donated the 30- to 35-foot-tall tree for use as the Governor's Christmas Tree. The spruce was planted in the mid 1970s as part of a community betterment project associated with the nation's bicentennial celebration. As the tree grew, however, its limbs blocked a sidewalk and its roots threatened nearby historical buildings.

The council's decision puts the well-proportioned tree to good use and saves removal costs. After cutting down the tree, the Conservation Department set it up at the governor's mansion, where it will remain through Christmas. In return for the donation, the Conservation Department will provide Unionville a tree that won't outgrow its space in the park.

Missouri mountain lion on display

This 105-pound mountain lion, which was struck and killed by a car on Highway 54 near Fulton in August 2003, is on display at the Runge Conservation Nature Center in Jefferson City. The male cat still had faint dark stripes on its fur, marking it as a juvenile.



Outdoor Calendar

Hunting	open	close
Common Snipe	9/1/05	12/16/05
Coyotes	5/9/05	3/31/06
Crow	11/1/05	3/3/06
Deer		
Archery	11/23/05	1/15/06
Muzzleloader	11/25/05	12/4/05
Antlerless	12/10/05	12/18/05
Furbearers	11/15/05	2/15/06
Groundhog	5/9/05	12/15/05
Pheasant		
North Zone	11/1/05	1/15/06
Southeast Zone	12/1/05	12/12/05
Quail	11/1/05	1/15/06
Rabbits	10/1/05	2/15/06
Ruffed Grouse	10/15/05	1/15/06
Squirrels	5/28/05	2/15/06
Turkey, archery	11/23/05	1/15/06
Waterfowl	please see the <i>Waterfowl Hunting Digest</i> or see www.missouriconservation.org/hunt/wtrfowl/info/seasons	

Fishing

Black Bass (certain Ozark streams)	5/28/05	2/28/06
impoundments and other streams year round		
Bullfrog	sunset	midnight
	6/30/06	10/31/06
Gigging Nongame Fish	9/15/05	1/31/06
Trout Parks		
Catch and release (Fri.–Sun.)	11/11/05	2/12/06

Trapping

Beaver	11/15/05	3/31/06
Furbearers	11/15/05	2/15/06
Otters and Muskrats	11/15/05	varies
see regulations for otter zones season dates and limits		

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of "Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations" and "Missouri Fishing Regulations," the "Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information," the "Waterfowl Hunting Digest" and the "Migratory Bird Hunting Digest." This information is on our Web site at www.missouriconservation.org/regs/ and at permit vendors.

The Conservation Department's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800/392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/.



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AGENT NOTEBOOK

Rabbit hunting with beagles

on brisk fall and winter days is full of excitement and happy frustrations. You hear the dogs barking—getting closer—and you know a rabbit will soon be near. In thick cover, you may or may not see a rabbit as it goes by. Sometimes, while you are walking, a rabbit will explode from under your feet. Talk about fun!

When the kids have a day off from school, we include them in the rabbit hunt, placing them where they will have the greatest chance of getting a successful shot. Watching those kids is more fun than our own hunting.

Rabbit hunting also provides a good opportunity to teach kids about hunter safety and sportsmanship. It's easier to teach kids if they can watch you practicing the lessons you are teaching. That means making sure to shoot only at game you can see, not taking a shot when anyone is in your line of fire and properly caring for the game you shoot.

Although it's not required, we've found it helpful to wear hunter orange while rabbit hunting. Often, when hunting in tall, thick cover, the only part of my hunting partners I could see was their hunter-orange vest or hat.

Rabbit season in Missouri runs through February 15. When you go, remember that a lapse of safety can easily result in tragedy. Let's enjoy what nature offers us. —Eric Swainston, Miller County



To learn about bobwhite quail management and Missouri's quail recovery efforts, check out www.missouriconservation.org
Keyword: quail

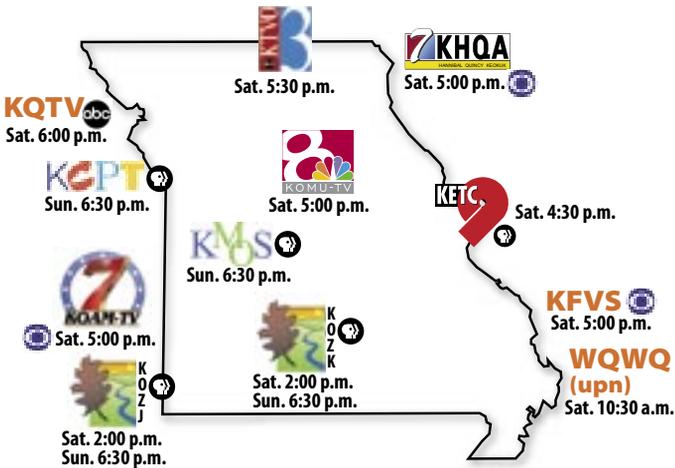


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Program Schedule

Television the way Nature intended!



SHOW SCHEDULE

Dec 3 & 4—FISH

Check out some unusual fish you might not be familiar with.

Dec 10 & 11—KIDS & EDUCATION

Discover the many joys of learning in an outdoor setting.

Dec 17 & 18—OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY

Meet some folks who have a love for the outdoors and an eye for the camera.

Dec 24 & 25—QUAIL

Learn more about one of Missouri's most popular game birds, the Bobwhite quail.

Dec 31 & Jan 1—HUNTING

Travel the state throughout the year and catch the action as hunters pursue duck, squirrel and deer.

OTHER OUTLETS (Previously aired episodes are also shown on the following)

Blue Springs CTV7

Brentwood BTV-10 Brentwood City Television

Columbia Columbia Channel

Hillsboro JCTV

Independence City 7 Cable

Joplin KGCS

Kearney Unite Cable

Parkville GATV

Perryville PVTV

Platte City Unite Cable

Poplar Bluff Poplar Bluff City Cable

Ste. Genevieve Ste. Genevieve Cable

St. Charles SC20 City Cable

St. Louis Charter Cable

St. Louis Consolidated Schools Cable

St. Louis City TV 10

St. Peters St. Peters Cable

Springfield KBLE36/MediaCom

Sullivan Fidelity Cable

West Plains OCTV

Meet Our Contributors



(Left to right) Private Land Conservationists **Tom Westhoff**, **Brent Vandeloecht**, **Jennifer Battson** and Regional Supervisor **Bob DeWitt**. Tom, a 28-year MDC veteran, works in Montgomery City and is an avid hunter, angler and trapper. He also manages for native plants on his 45 acres in Montgomery County. Brent, an enthusiastic outdoorsman and dedicated deer and quail hunter, works in Marshall. Jennifer, a certified forester, wife, and mother of three young children (Celia, 6; Claire, 4; and Stewart, 3), works from Linn. Bob, a 21-year MDC veteran, is based in Columbia. He and his wife, Susan, who is a forester with the Department, manage their Cooper County farm for wildlife and row crops.

Tom Cwynar is both a writer and an editor for the *Conservationist*. He hails from Michigan, but has lived in Missouri long enough to have enjoyed fishing most of our major reservoirs from what he calls, "The Little Yellow Boat That Could." His primary tools for enjoying the outdoors are a fishing rod, tent and canoe.



Jeff Cockerham is the Central and Northeast Region outreach and education supervisor and has worked for the Department for 10 years. He is a former middle school science teacher and elementary school principal and enjoys waterfowl hunting, smallmouth bass fishing and carving cork body duck decoys.

Ann Koenig lives in Columbia with her husband and two young sons. She has worked as a Conservation Department forester for eight years. Granddaughter of a stove mill owner, great niece of a WWII-era MDC naturalist, and daughter-in-law to owners of a Century Farm, she has strong ties to conservation.





Snowcapped

Freshly fallen snow and a cold arctic air mass gave this American elm tree a striking appearance for a brief time in the early morning.—*Jim Rathert*